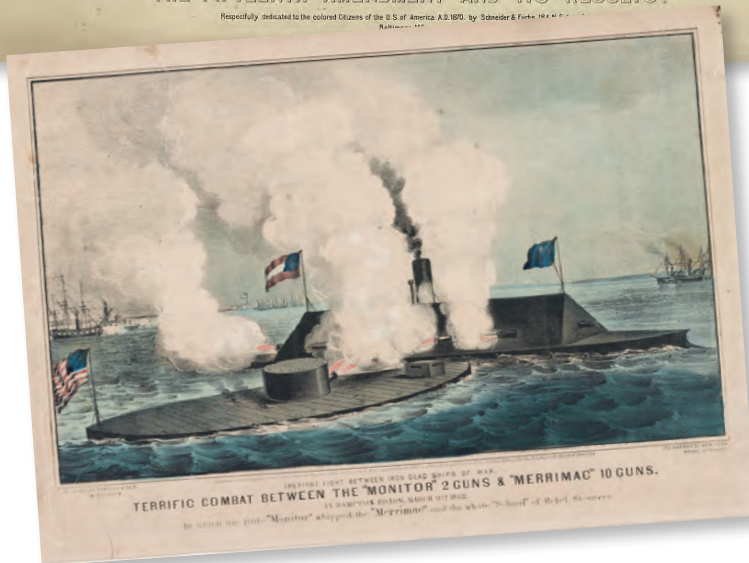
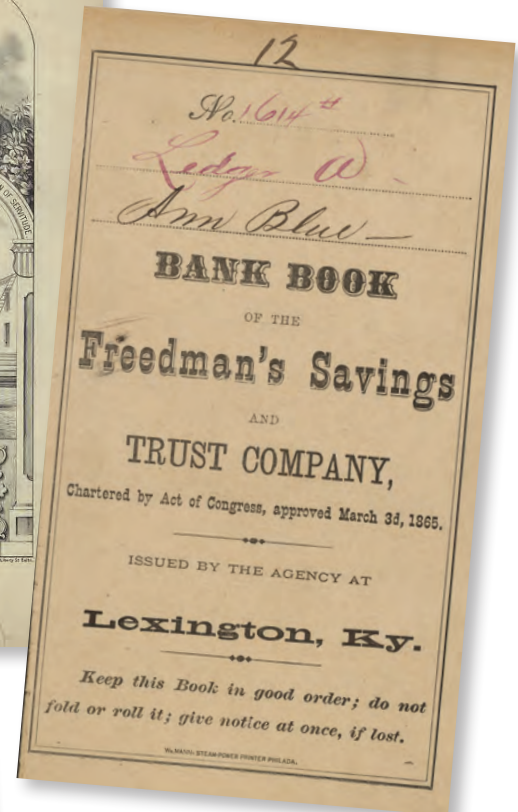


# CONGRESS AND THE CIVIL WAR

*Historic Treasures in Exhibition Hall*



The issue of slavery permeated debate in Congress from the founding of the country through the mid-nineteenth century. The failure to resolve differences between states on the issue of slavery led to the Civil War. To manage both the war effort and its consequences, Congress crafted new legislation that addressed a changing nation.

The U.S. Capitol is open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday – Saturday. It is closed on Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, and Inauguration Day.

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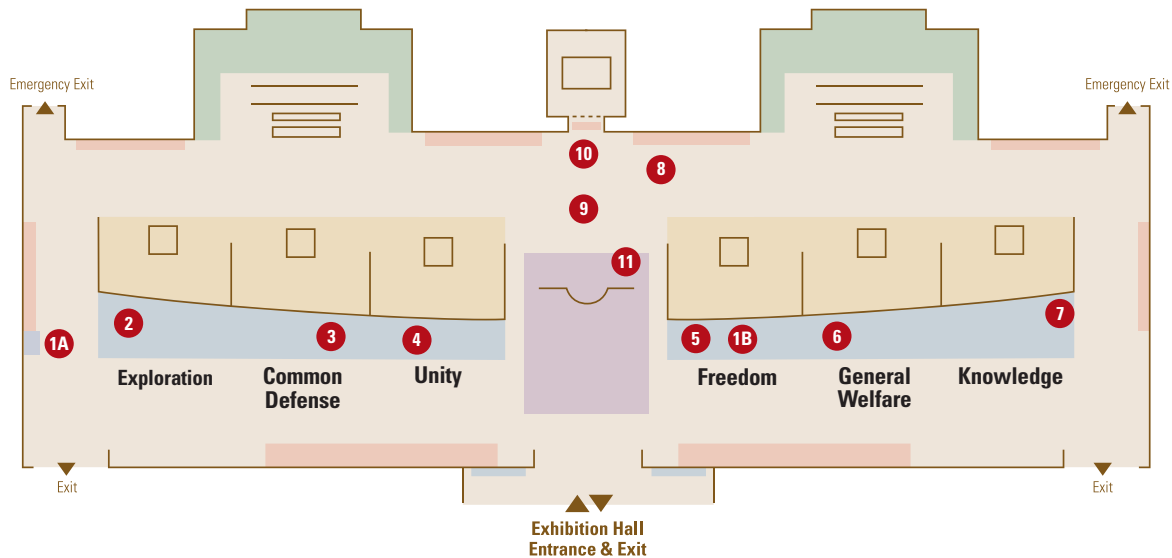


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# CONGRESS AND THE CIVIL WAR

*Historic Treasures in Exhibition Hall*

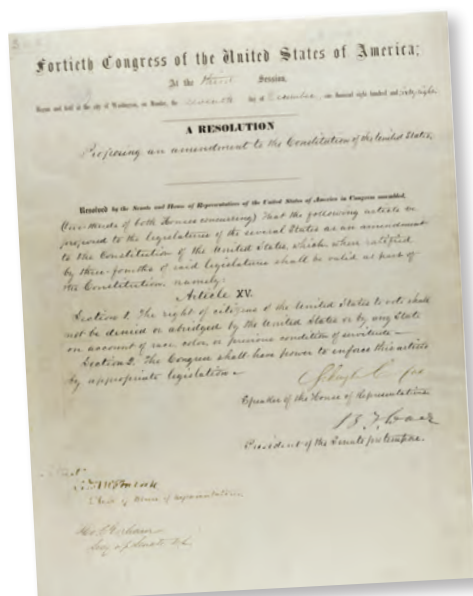
Currently on display



## 1A Fifteenth Amendment, February 26, 1869

The Fifteenth Amendment granted African-American males the right to vote, but was only the beginning of the struggle for voting rights. It was not until the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and subsequent legislation that African Americans were assured of their right to participate in U.S. elections.

*Records of the United States Government, National Archives and Records Administration*



## 1B Lithograph, *The Fifteenth Amendment And Its Results*, c. 1870

This commemorative print features portraits of President Abraham Lincoln, abolitionist Frederick Douglass, and Senator Hiram Revels of Mississippi.

*Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress*



## 2 Map, *Exploration of a Railroad Route, 1854-1857*

In Congress, northern and southern members could not decide on the route for a new railroad to the Pacific Coast. In 1853, Congress authorized the Army Corps of Engineers to survey four potential rail routes. Intense sectionalism blocked further legislation until southern states seceded and a northern-controlled Congress passed the Pacific Railroad Act in 1862.

*Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress*



## 3 Hand-colored lithograph, "Terrific Combat Between The 'Monitor'... & 'Merrimac,'" c. 1862

In 1861, Congress encouraged development of the ironclad warship. The March 9, 1862, naval battle at Hampton Roads, Virginia, depicted in this lithograph was the world's first between steam-powered ironclads, and it revolutionized naval warfare.

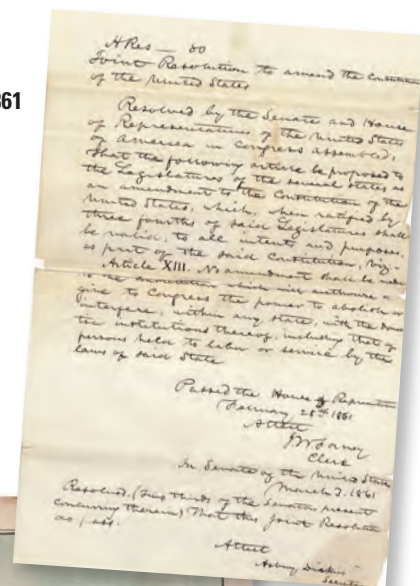
*Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress*



## 4 H.J. Res. 80, (Corwin Amendment), February 28, 1861

In 1861, in an attempt to avoid disunion and war, Ohio Representative Thomas Corwin proposed an amendment to prevent Congress from interfering with slavery in any state. It would have been the thirteenth amendment to the Constitution, but was never ratified.

*Records of the U.S. Senate, National Archives and Records Administration*



## 5 FIGHTING FOR FREEDOM

In the Militia Act of 1862, Congress allowed President Abraham Lincoln to recruit African-American men for military service. Nearly 200,000 African Americans fought in the Civil War—for the Union, for freedom, and for their right to full citizenship.

### Broadside, "Meeting For the Organization of a Colored Regiment in the District of Columbia," 1863

*Records of the Adjutant General's Office, National Archives and Records Administration*

### MEETING For the Organization of a COLORED REGIMENT IN THE District of Columbia.

The President has authorized Col. J. D. Turner, late Chaplain in the Army, and Lieut. Col. W. G. Raymond, late Chaplain in Trinity Hospital of this city, to raise a Regiment of Colored Troops in the District of Columbia.

A meeting will be held in Asbury Chapel, corner of 11th and K streets, on Monday evening next, May 4th, at 7 1/2 o'clock, to organize, and make arrangements to visit the President and receive his orders.

All who desire to enlist in the 1st Regiment District Columbia Colored Volunteers, and thus demonstrate their manhood, are earnestly invited to be present, and hear, consult, and decide.

By order of—  
J. D. TURNER,  
W. G. RAYMOND!



### Hand-colored ambrotype, Portrait of a black soldier

*Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress*

## 6 THE FREEDMEN'S BUREAU

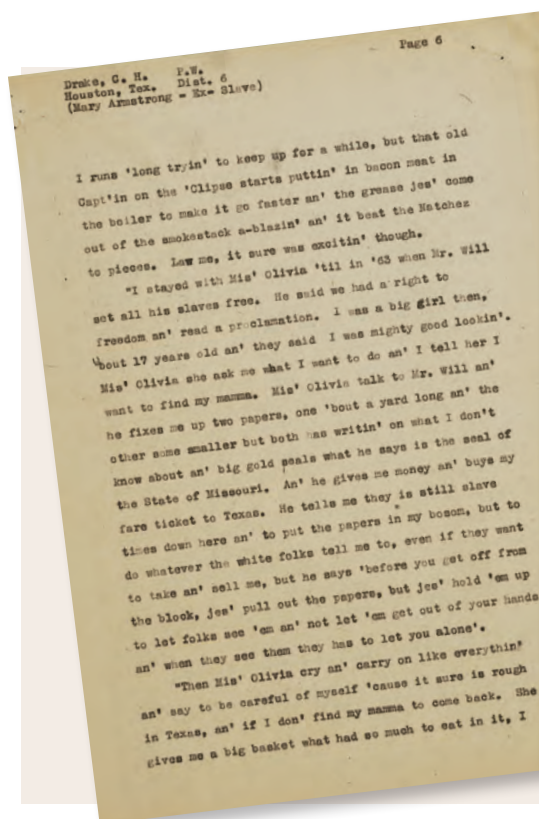
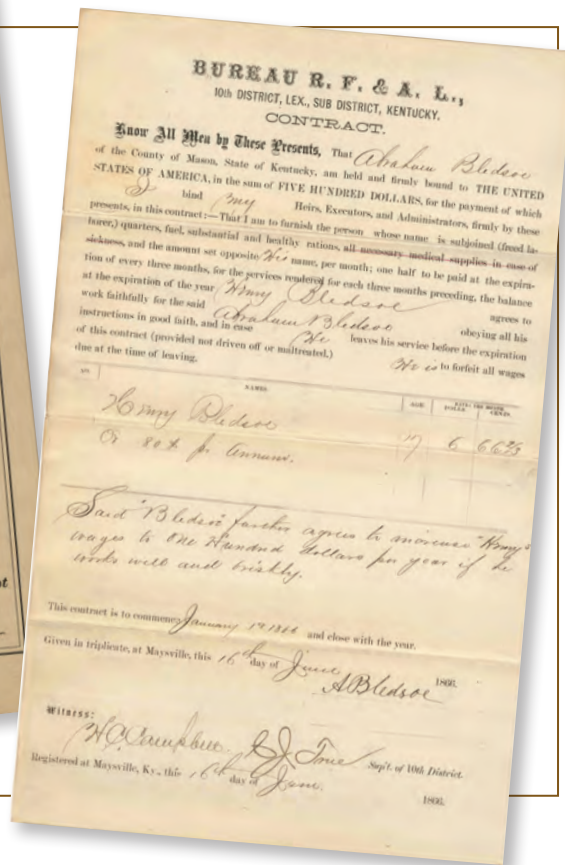
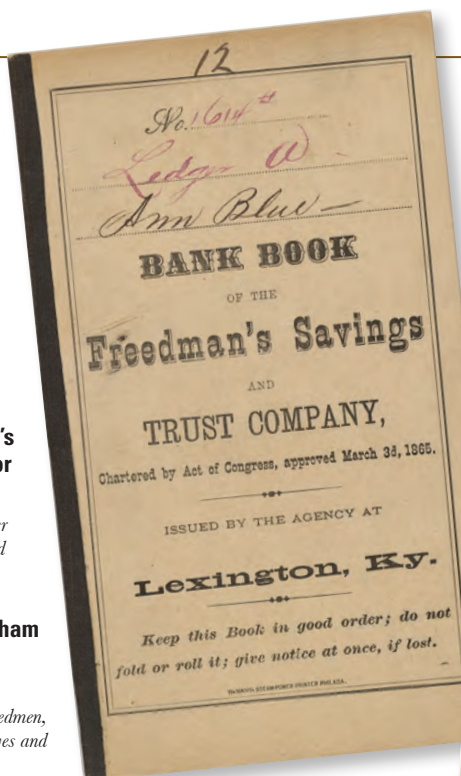
In 1865, Congress created the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands, known as the Freedmen's Bureau, to provide for the needs of displaced and formerly-enslaved persons. Separately, Congress chartered the Freedman's Bank to encourage savings.

### Pass book from the Freedman's Savings and Trust Company for Ann Blue, 1873

*Records of the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, National Archives and Records Administration (right)*

### Labor contract between Abraham Bledsoe and Henry Bledsoe (freedman), January 19, 1866

*Records of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, National Archives and Records Administration (far right)*



## 7 THE SLAVE NARRATIVES PROJECT

Thousands of survivors of slavery recounted their lives to interviewers from the Federal Writers Project (FWP) in the late 1930s. The FWP was part of the New Deal-era Works Progress Administration, funded by Congress with the 1935 Emergency Relief Appropriations Act. These narratives—preserved by the Library of Congress—remain invaluable personal accounts of life in slavery.

### Gelatin-silver photographic print and narrative of Mary Armstrong, Houston, Texas, 1937

*Prints and Photographs Division and Manuscript Division, Library of Congress*



# SPOTLIGHT ON: THE CAPITOL DURING THE CIVIL WAR

When the Civil War began, the Capitol was in the middle of a major expansion. New, larger chambers, which had been built to accommodate a growing Congress, now seemed especially spacious after the withdrawal of Southern representatives and senators. The grand rooms soon filled with the clamor of Union soldiers as the Capitol became a temporary barracks for some of the 75,000 troops called for by President Abraham Lincoln in April 1861. Brick ovens were constructed in the basement to provide bread. For roughly two months in the fall of 1862, nurses and doctors treated wounded soldiers in the Rotunda, the Old Hall of the House, and corridors of the Capitol.

Meanwhile, construction of the building extension continued. The Capitol Dome was finished on December 2, 1863, with the installation of the Statue of Freedom at the building's apex. President Lincoln's second inauguration was held on the

## Union troops on the East Front plaza of the Capitol, May 13, 1861

Prints and  
Photographs  
Division, Library  
of Congress



## "The Eighth Massachusetts Regiment in the Rotunda of the Capitol, Washington," *Harper's Weekly*, May 25, 1861

Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress

East Front steps on March 4, 1865. Six weeks later, President Lincoln was assassinated, and his body lay in state in the Rotunda beneath the scaffolding for the partially-completed fresco, *The Apotheosis of Washington*.



## 8 Photograph of Lincoln's second inauguration, March 4, 1865

Abraham Lincoln reads his address  
standing next to the Lincoln table on  
the East Front of the Capitol.

*Architect of the Capitol*

## 9 Table from Lincoln's second inauguration, 1865

This table was made from surplus  
ironwork cast for the Capitol Dome.  
The Commissioner of Public  
Buildings, B.B. French, had the table  
made for his own use, but loaned it  
for Lincoln's second inauguration.

*Massachusetts Historical Society*



## 10 Catafalque, 1865

Made of rough pine boards nailed together, the catafalque  
(a support for a casket) was hastily constructed in 1865 for  
the lying-in-state of Abraham Lincoln in the Rotunda.

*Architect of the Capitol*



## SPOTLIGHT ON: THE CAPITOL DURING THE CIVIL WAR *continued*



### 11 **The Apotheosis of Washington,** **Constantino Brumidi, fresco, 1865**

Italian-American artist Constantino Brumidi painted the 4,664-square-foot fresco in the eye of the Capitol Rotunda. He created this masterpiece of American art over 11 months at the end of the Civil War.

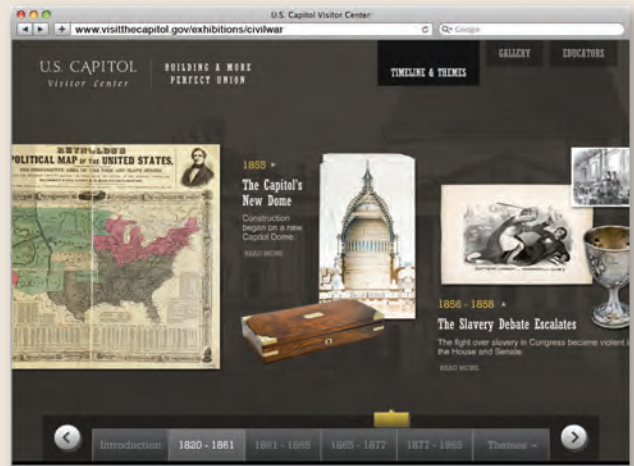
*Architect of the Capitol*



ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL

### **U.S. Capitol Dome under construction, 1861**

When the Civil War began, the Capitol Dome was only partially completed. The firm hired to construct the Dome, Janes, Fowler, Kirtland & Company, kept working during the war. The rising Dome made an impression on President Lincoln. He felt that if people saw the construction of the Capitol going on, it was a sign that the Union would go on.



## *Congress and the Civil War Online*



Explore “Building a More Perfect Union,” an online exhibition that tells the story of Congress and the Capitol during the Civil War. “Building a More Perfect Union” allows online visitors to zoom in on rare artifacts and documents, learn about the members of Congress involved in the Civil War’s most notorious debates, and discover how the Capitol itself grew structurally during the nation’s most difficult era. Visit [www.visitthecapitol.gov/exhibitions/civilwar](http://www.visitthecapitol.gov/exhibitions/civilwar).



*When viewing “Building a More Perfect Union” online, use the “zoom” feature to examine small details in the documents and artifacts.*